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SUBJECT: PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL'S GROWING TRANSIT COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP

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POLICY ISSUE: The Growing Transit Communities program is a three-year effort that has resulted in a regional framework to support transit-oriented communities. This effort is largely consistent with the City's plans, including Downtown and BelRed, and it recognizes stations where development is not expected, such as South Bellevue. The City has the opportunity to support this regional agreement by adopting a resolution at a future meeting.

**DIRECTION
NEEDED**

FROM COUNCIL: This memorandum provides a brief update on the Growing Transit Communities project. Staff is preparing for a study session on November 25 that will review the Growing Transit Communities Compact agreement in greater detail for Council consideration.

BACKGROUND

The Puget Sound Regional Council's grant funded Growing Transit Communities program is drawing to a conclusion this fall. Over the past three years the program has developed a regional framework for supporting housing and economic development near transit stations and has explored more detailed planning for the north, south and east transit corridors. Bellevue has been a long-time leader of planning for transit-oriented growth, and our experiences were fundamental in supporting the development of regional strategies. Additionally, the work of the Growing Transit Communities program helped further Bellevue's objectives for the BelRed Corridor and established a platform for coordination with transit agencies, businesses, developers and adjacent cities.

On September 26, the PSRC Executive Board took action to approve the regional framework for transit oriented development, called the Growing Transit Communities Compact. It is anticipated that cities, counties and other members of the partnership will sign the Compact over the next couple of months. The Growing Transit Communities Oversight Committee recommended approval of the Compact at its July 12 meeting. The Committee met again for its second to last time on October 18 to review East Corridor implementation and a draft of the Fair

Housing Equity Assessment, and to research establishing a property acquisition fund. The final meeting of the Committee is scheduled for January 17, 2014.

The notes below provide a brief update on the overall work of the Growing Transit Communities partnership and the East Corridor-specific work. Staff is preparing a presentation on the Compact for the November 25 study session. At that time, the Council could review options for a resolution approving the regional Compact for consideration at a later meeting.

Growing Transit Communities Compact

The Growing Transit Communities Compact is a statement of three broad goals that provide a regional framework for coordinating among multiple partners to support transit-oriented communities. The Compact seeks to take advantage of and get the most out of the regional investment in light rail and other forms of high capacity transit; speaks broadly to the region's ambitions to attract growth to transit areas, while recognizing that each station area is unique and that some strategies may work in some locations and not in others; and anticipates flexibility in pursuing strategies. The Compact is not legally binding and does not alter local control.

The three foundational goals of the Compact are:

- *Attract more of the region's residential and employment growth to high capacity transit communities.*
- *Provide housing choices affordable to a full range of incomes near high capacity transit.*
- *Increase access to opportunity for existing and future residents of transit communities.*

The Compact defines the region's shared goals about serving transit hubs, their distinct land use characteristics, promoting thoughtful growth around stations, creating a range of housing opportunities and increasing economic prosperity.

The Compact, while stating that cities, PSRC, and transit agencies all need to work together for our communities to be successful, also contains language in several areas that recognizes that land use decisions rest with local governments and the importance of partnering with our transit providers.

The background documents PSRC created as part of the program reflect the City's plans for transit-oriented development in BelRed and Downtown. They also state that no land use changes are planned for the single-family residential areas. Regarding the South Bellevue station, it states:

No land use changes are envisioned for the South Bellevue area. The City of Bellevue has expressly stated that Transit Oriented Development is not appropriate at this station. Adopted policy TR-7519 of the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan preserves the existing single family neighborhood and environmental critical areas.

East Corridor Implementation

In addition to the regional framework and strategies, the Growing Transit Communities program explored more focused strategies to help the north, south and east corridors succeed. Recognizing Bellevue's and Redmond's substantial planning efforts, the East Corridor work

looked at how to further the station area and transit planning work already completed, including several issues to focus on:

- Public-private partnerships
- Transportation connectivity
- Business retention and attraction
- Affordable housing

Phase 1 of the East Corridor work produced a best practices document in 2012 on those four topic areas. Phase 2 focused on two specific areas where those concepts could be applied:

- How to support a potential transit-oriented development (TOD) project integrated with Sound Transit's planned park and ride at the 130th Avenue station; and
- The potential formation of an energy district at the Overlake Village station in Redmond

The intent of the 130th Avenue station work was to ask the question: In lieu of a surface parking lot currently planned by Sound Transit, could a public/private partnership create an integrated TOD/Park and Ride project that meets Sound Transit's objectives, is consistent with City plans, helps activate the area, increases ridership, creates a safer, more welcoming environment, and helps catalyze additional development around the station? The East Corridor work has been instrumental in pulling together multiple parties, including Sound Transit, the City and PSRC to jointly explore the potential of this site.

The Growing Transit Communities program also extended planning efforts in the north and south corridors and explored affordable housing strategies, federal Fair Housing compliance, property acquisition tools, and financing tools. More information about these components of the program will be reviewed at the November 25 Council meeting.

ALTERNATIVES: N/A

RECOMMENDATION: N/A

ATTACHMENTS: N/A